

FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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April 2013

The Board of County Commissioners would like to share with the Frederick County taxpayers and citizens the proposed changes to the fire tax districts.

The proposed Frederick County Fiscal Year 2014 Operating Budget reflects the consolidation of the fire tax districts into the General Fund. For the past two years, the fire tax districts have been subsidized by the General Fund in the approximate amount of 16 million dollars. When the fire tax districts were established, they were meant to be self-sustaining.

For the fund to be self-sustaining, the fire tax would need to be increased to a 17 cent consolidated rate. To avoid this impact, the Board of County Commissioners, in cooperation with the fire and rescue volunteers and the Division of Fire and Rescue Services, is proposing that all fire and rescue services be included in the General Fund.

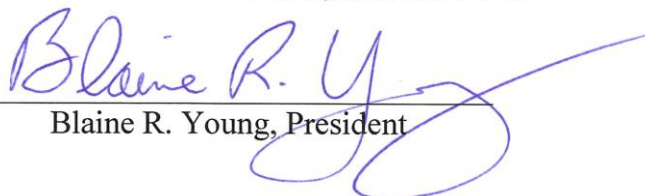
This proposal will result in the taxpayers having a new recalibrated general property tax rate and the abolishment of the fire tax districts. If the fire tax districts are not consolidated into the General Fund, the general real property tax rate would be below the constant yield tax rate for Fiscal Year 2014. The General Fund will now reflect the total cost of fire and rescue services in the amount of 46.7 million dollars, along with all other county government services. Additional funding incentives have been allocated in the proposed Fiscal Year 2014 Operating Budget to encourage volunteerism in fire and rescue services. As the result of this proposed change, a true comparative budget won't be recognized until the following fiscal year's budget.

The taxpayers will now benefit from the protection of the homestead property tax credit that provides predictability and stability with their property tax rate. The absence of the homestead credit and the recent decline and volatility of assessments were major factors in the significant deficits in the fire tax districts.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please contact the County Commissioners at 301-600-1100 (countycommissioners@FrederickCountyMD.gov) or Budget Officer Regina Howell at 301-600-3191 (rhowell@FrederickCountyMD.gov).

The Board of County Commissioners will continue to move forward to find efficiencies and savings while maintaining and preserving core services for our citizens. We thank you in advance for your comments and input as we deal with our budgetary issues.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND**


Blaine R. Young, President